



“True Worshippers”

A Litmus Test
James 1:26-27

If I ask you to list for me “good works” what would you say? After waiting a while, state that there is one good work that you did not list that I will bring out in the text...

> The church did not take long to get mixed up about its role and good works...Look with me at James 4 and the confusion ... We really need to get this right...so back to our text.

True worship produces :

I. Control – “bridles not” (v. 26)

Wrangling the :

- A. Dialogue – “ *his tongue* “
- B. Deceit – “ *deceives his own heart* “
- C. Dynamics – “*religion is vain*”

II. Care – “visits the” (v. 27)

Working with the :

- A. Virtuous – “*pure ...and undefiled*”
- B. Vulnerable– “*fatherless and widows*”

III. Caution – “to keep ” (v. 27)

Watching out for :

- A. Self – “*himself* ”
- B. Splatter – “*unspotted*”
- C. Selfishness – “*from the world*”

EXEGESIS

V. 26

- If any man among you seem to be religious – seem = to be of the opinion
 - Have you ever met someone who was quick to let you know that he was a fine Christian only to shake your head later and wonder what their idea of Christianity was...
 - This passage seems to promote itself as a test or at least a criteria for religious behavior
- Religious or religion = often misunderstood because of the different and changing uses of the words.

- Ever have someone ask you what religion you are? They are either asking:
 - Whether you are a Christian or Muslim or Buddhist etc.
 - Or what denomination of Christian you are like Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal etc.
- *Religion in this passage = threskia = fearing or worshipping God*
- Bridles not = to hold in check or restrain – interestingly it is stated in the negative sense of not being able to or simply not doing it.
- But deceives his own heart = either worshippers of the most high keep their tongue in check or they are just kidding themselves as to the value of their worship before God and their devotion to Him.
- This man's religion is vain = dead, lifeless, meaningless, of no value
- Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this...
 - God's view of things is often different than most Christians
 - That which pleases Him will have to be 100% pure and without selfish motives
 - Illustration:
 - Who in here eats rice?
 - Have you ever seen what floats to the top when you put the contents of the bag in water? Farm materials...What I learned working a rice mill makes me wash my rice before cooking.
- The rice mill actually has the ability to take out all the farm materials ...but then they put back as much as allowable by the FDA . God does not want us to add anything to our worship

that contaminates. He wants us to give 1005 of our selves to His will.

- To visit = to take notice and give care for
- The fatherless and widows –
 - First 1 slides on how God feels about widows

 - Fatherless – obviously those which the father has died or has abandoned
 - Widows –
 - widows indeed in I Timothy 5:3
 - Deserve honor

 - No children or near relatives like nephews
 - Trusts in God
 - Continues in Prayer
 - Over 60 years old
 - Well reported for Good works
 - Raised children
 - Lodged strangers
 - Washed saints feet
 - Relieved the afflicted
 - Followed after every good work

- In their affliction = ministering to their lack or ways they suffer. Applies to all those vulnerable in our society...

Those who have need for:

- Health
- Labor
- Companionship
- Fellowship
- The Poor

- And = and ...there is no kai or and in the greek = should be “in order to keep oneself”
 - Perhaps it is not a both and but one that helps prevent the other. As we humble ourselves to help those less fortunate and more vulnerable, we reap the side benefit of not being polluted by the world’s clamoring for pleasure and self gratification.